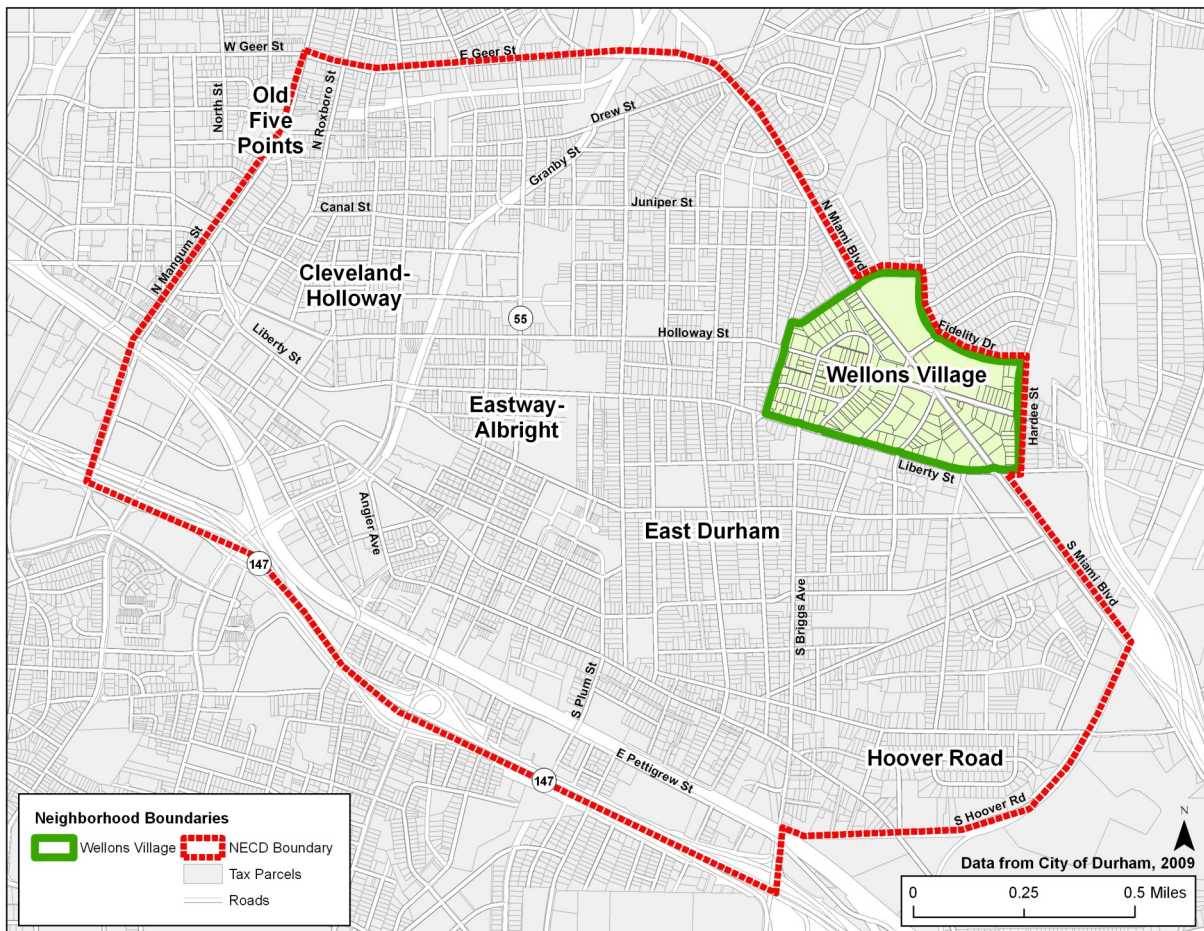


Wellons Village Neighborhood Plan



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Part I: Contextual & Background Data

History

The area surrounding the Wellons Village Shopping Center is comprised of a series of streets clustered directly east of a neighborhood retail center. According to the staff of the Department of Community Development, the Village was once a “thriving commercial and retail area surrounded by tidy, well-kept single-family homes” with a white residential majority. Since then, the residential demographics have shifted, and the white residents are no longer the majority. They have been replaced by African-American and Hispanic/Latino residents. Through observation, it is evident homes can no longer be generalized as ‘tidy and well-kept.’ Several have been visibly altered to accommodate more than a single family, and yards have been overrun with brush from neglect. Traveling away from the shopping center, the condition of the neighborhood becomes increasingly better, as evidenced by less for-sale signs, less noise pollution, less thru-traffic, and more human presence. There seems to be more of a ‘neighborhood’ feel in these areas as the present individuals seem to belong to the homes, compared to those just ‘passing through’ on the way to the Village.

The diverse and active Shopping Center itself is a key indicator of economic status and quality of life in the neighborhood. Retail establishments include a diverse array of products, ranging from a Lowes Foods supermarket to Mexican restaurants, Chinese restaurants, and tiendas. The Shopping Center is a heavily populated loitering spot on weekends but nearly empty on a weekday, which implies that patrons are employed and working. The convenience of the Shopping Center to homes and public transportation allows it to serve as a common gathering space for neighborhood residents and patrons.

The businesses in Northeast Central Durham have experienced dramatic changes over the past two decades, such as local economic fluctuations and diverse demographic shifts in clientele. The physical and social environment surrounding the business districts have all been altered by development in the area, trickle-down repercussions from large corporations, and the diminishing ‘mom and pop store’ environment. A lack of re-investment in infrastructure (i.e. roads, parks, public services, etc.) in the greater Northeast Central Durham (NECD) neighborhood has created a struggle for business owners to compete with other city retailers and to remove the negative perception of the area. This in turn also discourages potential business owners and entrepreneurs, thus perpetuating the lack of investment.

Image 1: The Village Shopping Center



Additionally, businesses in the Village provide necessary goods for residents like groceries, but some have reputations for exploiting residents through disreputable services. These businesses include “quick cash marts” that charge high interest rates and pawn shops that capitalize on traded goods.

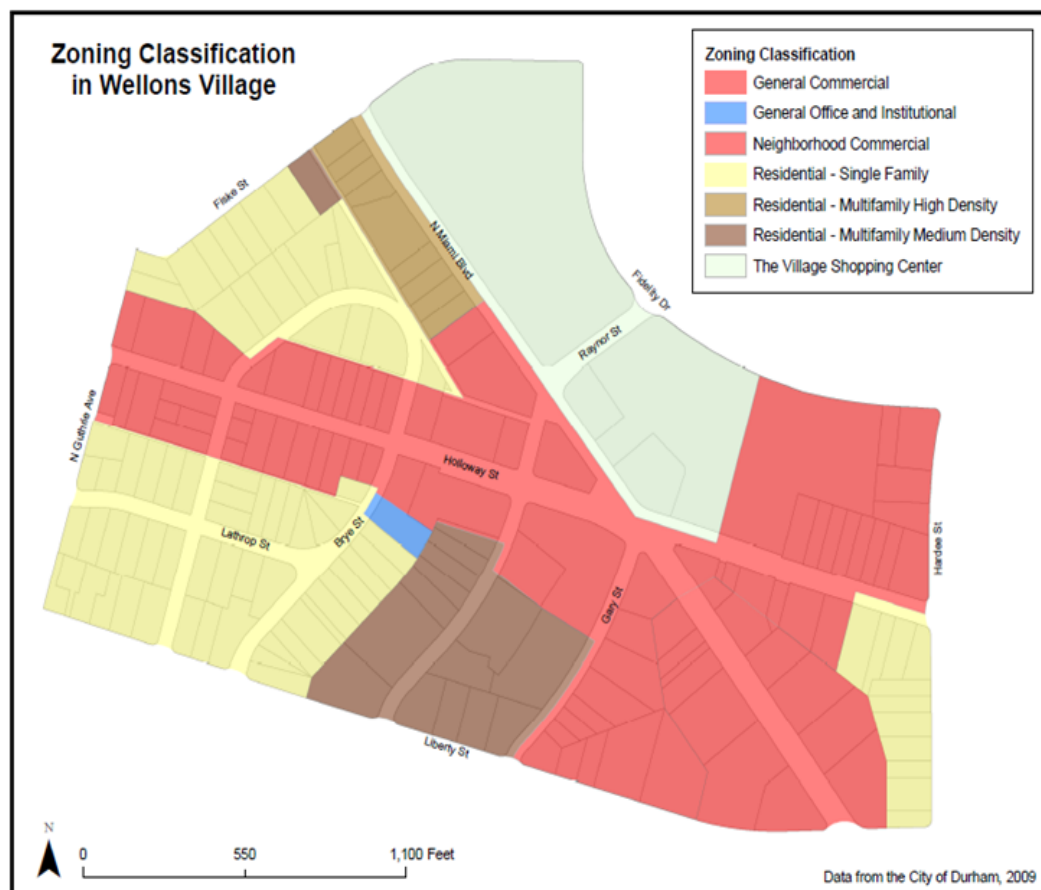
Geographic Boundaries and Surrounding Commercial Area

The Village Shopping Center sits directly adjacent to a residential neighborhood, with Fidelity Drive providing a physical divide between the Shopping Center and neighborhood. North Hardee Street is the boundary for the business area on the West Side, with a bowling alley, also a neighborhood asset, lying outside this boundary. The major thoroughfares in the area are North Miami Boulevard and Holloway Street, which intersect roughly in the center of the business area. Liberty Street is the southern boundary of the business area, and the eastern point is at the intersection of North Miami Boulevard at the cemetery. A buffer area between Holloway Street and Gary Street and Holloway Street and North Miami Boulevard are the western boundaries of the business area. At the north, Wesley Street and Fiske Street are the limits of the shopping center. The boundary for the business district area was chosen based on zoning, existing land use, physical boundaries, and by recommendations of area business owners, who indicated where they felt the area’s limits were and what physical boundaries of the business area were already established.

Zoning and Land Use

The existing land uses and zoning designations within the business area boundary are variations of commercial use (see **Figure 1**). The Village Shopping Center is zoned for commercial neighborhood and commercial center. Towards the southeastern boundary along North Miami Boulevard and Liberty Street is a commercial general district. The properties along North Miami and Holloway Street are zoned for commercial neighborhood.

Figure 1: Wellons Village Commercial District Zoning



As the land use classification map shows (see **Appendix 1**), the land uses are predominantly retail and service. This includes fast food chain stores, grocery stores, clothing stores, automobile parts stores, hardware stores, and gas stations, as well as personal services and pawn shops. The Lowes grocery store is the primary grocery store for the entire Northeast Central Durham community. The business area is bounded by residential neighborhoods to the north, west, and south, and Highway 70 on the east.

While the previous description applies to the business district at the Village, it is important to note the potential relationship this district will have with the one at the intersection of Angier Avenue and Driver Street. Stakeholders repeatedly commented on the inability to sustainably revive a neighborhood if it was done in isolation. Connectivity between all neighborhoods will lead to overall prosperity of a city and sustained development, retained attraction for outsiders, and an overall feeling of economic prosperity, rather than pockets of poverty scattered between small centers of success. The Village and Angier/Driver have different needs, but depend on one another for economic prosperity because they are linked to similar customers and one city. Partnership would require much patience to materialize. It is critical to start bringing the business owners in both areas together before anything further is done, so facilitating conversation is the first step.

Demographics

The US Census has shown a dramatic shift in the racial/ethnic makeup of the Village Center neighborhoods from 1990 to 2000 (see **Appendix 2**). Using 2000 Census data from the nearest neighborhood to the commercial district directly to the north reveals that 70 percent of the population is African-American. Nineteen percent is Hispanic, and nine percent identifies as white. This is a change from 1990 data stating that the same neighborhood was 78% African-American, 1% Hispanic, and 22% white. While the percentage of African-Americans has decreased in the ten-year period, the overall population of African-Americans has increased by 9%. Mirroring the state and city trend, the population of Hispanics has boomed in the ten year period and has even been incorporated into the commercial/business culture in the neighborhood indicated by ethnic restaurants and bilingual signs.

The overall population of the neighborhood to the north of the Village Shopping Center has grown 21% from 1990 to 2000. Regarding ages of those moving to the area, children and youth (ages 0-19) is the fastest growing population (32%) while there has been a slight decline in the number of residents in the area over 65 years old (14% decrease from 1990 to 2000). Other age ranges have all increased evenly with the overall population growth.

Crime

According to police officers, the Durham Police Department has substantially reduced area crime in the past several years. An interview with Lieutenant Howard Alexander, who has spent 23 years on the force, mostly in NECD, states “there has been a tremendous effort by law enforcement and city government to go after the career criminals that have wrecked havoc on that community and others.” Lieutenant Alexander agrees that the “neighborhood is on the upswing” and believes law enforcement, city government and “a lot of help from federal authorities has helped turn [the neighborhood] around.” The cycle of poverty and drugs is to blame for the crime in the first place. Gang activity is also a way of life in surrounding communities and needs to be combated by creating programs for youth. “People don't realize how devastating that combination is,” Howard says. “When you lose help, hope, and your family is dysfunctional, watch out.” In discussing a revitalization plan for North East Central Durham and the Village area, Howard believes the Angier and Driver areas must be included in neighborhood uplift. He expresses that one neighborhood cannot succeed while another lags behind; crime and violence will spill over into the new neighborhood.

While there is an apparent and sharp increase in crimes of many types at the Village, as shown in **Figure 2**, it is important to note that it is difficult to see these data as indicating a trend. Crime data for the years 2007-2008 reflect a small period of time and appear disconnected from their context. That said, certain categories demand attention, particularly larceny, which jumped nearly 90% from 2007 to 2008. Burglaries more than doubled, robberies tripled, and a significant increase in assaults occurred as well. Unfortunately, in reporting on these incidents, local press have attributed them directly to the dilapidated economic hub.

Figure 2: Wellons Village Crime Statistics

Crime	Wellons Village 2007	Wellons Village 2008	% Change, 2007-2008	City of Durham	% of Durham
Arson	1	0	-100..%	27	0.18%
Assault	14	19	35.71%	2,077	14.07%
Burglary	18	40	122.21%	3,481	23.57%
Homicide	0	2	-	22	0.15%
Larceny	127	241	89.76%	7,351	49.78%
Motor Vehicle Theft	9	11	22.22%	856	5.80%
Robbery	7	23	228.57%	885	5.99%
Rape	0	1	-	68	0.46%

Source: Durham Police Department, Jan. 2007 – Dec. 2008

Commercial Building Stock and Housing Characteristics

The Village Shopping Center and surrounding commercial area is a major generator of commercial activity in Northeast Central Durham community. The location at the intersection of Miami Boulevard and Holloway Street enables it to provide goods and services to residents of NECD as well as residents of east Durham

Figure 3: Incidents of Crime in Wellons Village

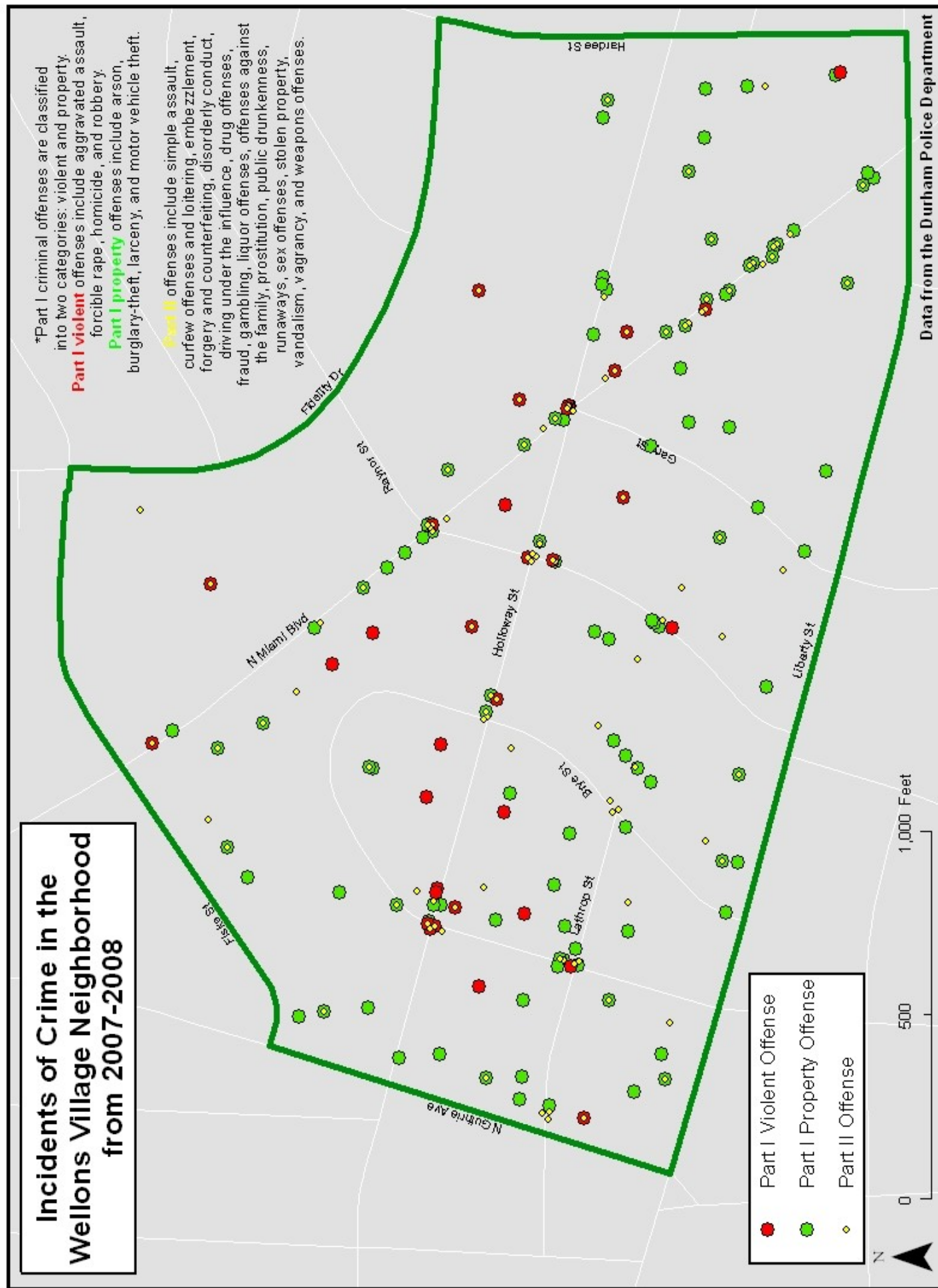
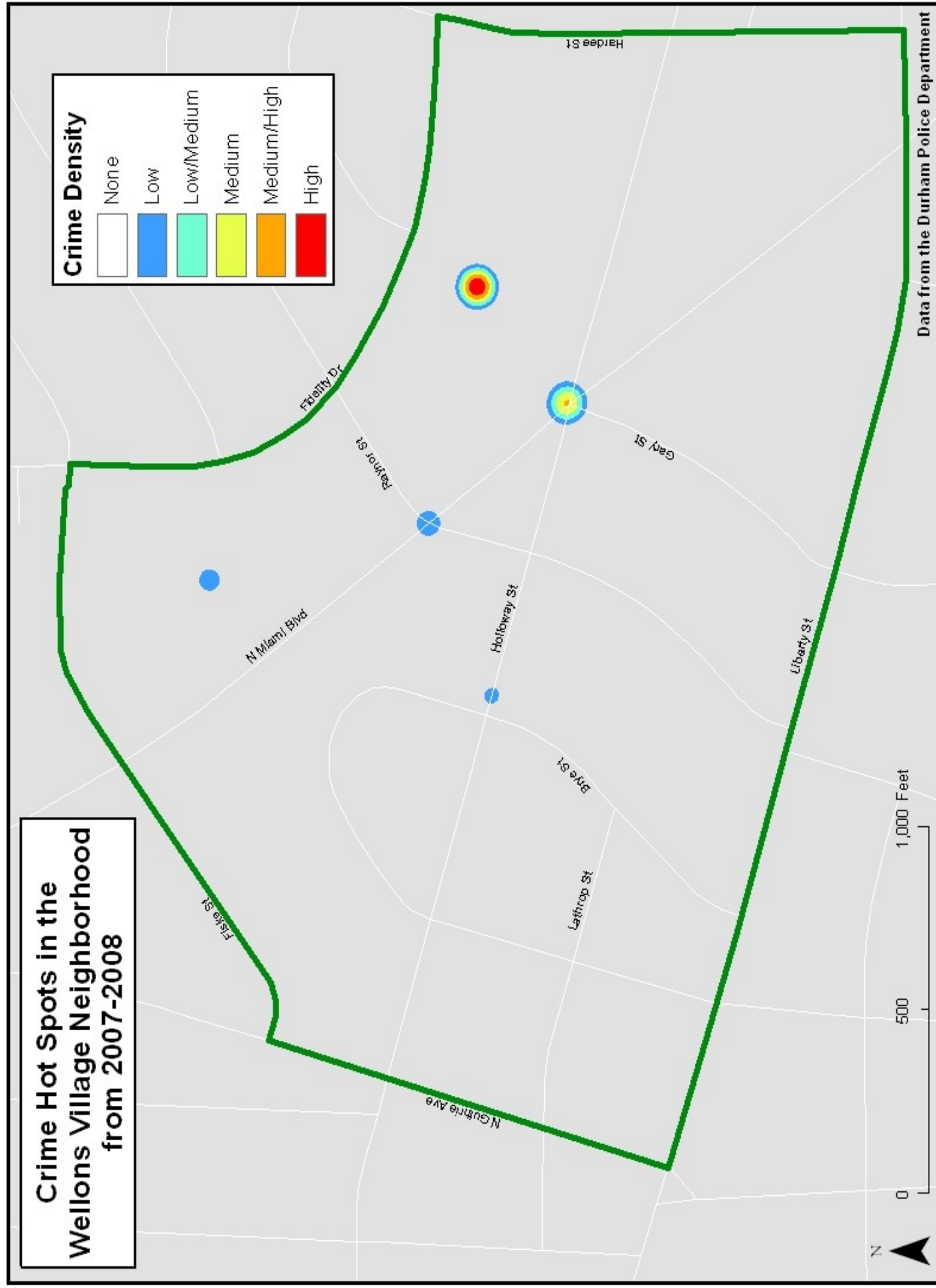


Figure 4: Crime Hot Spots in Wellons Village



County. Surrounding the Village Shopping Center are numerous businesses providing complementary goods and services such as restaurants, convenience stores, automobile centers, and personal service businesses. The renovation of the Center in the early 1990s improved the appearance of the shopping center and attracted a number of businesses to the Shopping center and surrounding area, however many vacant areas still exist (see **Appendix 3**).

Wellons Village Commercial district is situated on the eastern edge of the NECD boundary and is surrounded by neighborhoods to the north, west and south. The older Wellons Village neighborhood that the Village Shopping Center backs up to was built in the late 1950s and early 1960s. An upscale apartment complex was also developed during this time to the north of the neighborhood on North Hardee Street. The relevant data for this area comes from Durham Census Tract 10.02, Block Group 1, obtained from the U.S. Census of 1990 and 2000. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of households increased 17 percent, while the number of non-family households increased by over 100 percent. The number of housing units in the neighborhood increased, and the number of vacant units increased but only by four units, roughly five percent (See **Figure 3**).

Figure 3: Housing Statistics in Neighborhoods Surrounding Wellons Village Commercial District

Housing	Wellons Village 1990	Wellons Village 2000	% Change 1990-2000	Northeast Central Durham	% of NECD	City of Durham	% of Durham
Total Households	835	973	16.53%	8,492	100.00%	74,981	100.00%
Household Size	3.26	2.93	-10.12%	2.7	-	2.4	-
Single Headed Householder	491	625	27.29%	2,391	28.16%	11,954	15.94%
Non-family Households	30	65	116.67%	1,933	22.76%	31,423	41.91%
Housing Units	915	1,049	14.64%	9,458	100.00%	80,797	100.00%
Occupancy Status							
Occupied Units	835	973	16.53%	8,492	89.79%	74,981	92.80%
Vacant Units	80	76	-5.00%	966	10.21%	5,816	7.20%
Tenure Status							
Owner Occupied Units	305	311	1.97%	2,141	25.21%	36,645	48.87%
Renter Occupied Units	530	662	24.91%	6,351	74.79%	38,336	51.13%

Source: US Census Bureau, Census 1990 and 2000, SF1

Economic Status

There has been a slight decline in the percentage of people who are employed in the neighborhood just to the north of the Village Shopping Center. It is assumed that this commercial hub has a direct impact on the employment among area residents. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, approximately 73% of the population

over 16 had employment, while only 71% of the same population was employed in 2000. Changes in education levels in the two decades may also be correlated with employment. U.S. Census statistics show that the population graduating from high school or earning a higher degree has decreased by nine percent. Also, individuals and families living below the poverty level have increased since 1990. Approximately 25% of families in this area were living below poverty in 1990, compared to 34% in 2000 (see **Figure 4**).

The median household income, while higher than the rest of the Northeast Central Durham area by 24%, is still significantly lower than the city of Durham's median household income. Residents in the Village Shopping Center neighborhood make approximately 60% the average income of the city of Durham. This has a significant effect on the overall neighborhood economy, economic opportunities available in the area, as well as the local housing market, as residents work with less disposable income.

Figure 4: Economic Status of Wellons Village Neighborhood Residents

Economic Status	Wellons Village 1990	Wellons Village 2000	% Change 1990-2000	Northeast Central Durham	City of Durham
Employed (of the population over 16)	1,137	1,280	12.58%	5,706	100,438
Median household income	\$21,836	\$24,726	13.24%	\$20,004	\$41,160
Families below poverty level	599	981	63.77%	1,059	5,010
Individuals below poverty level	2,343	2,806	19.76%	14,698	26,605
Percent high school graduate or higher	67.00%	58.00%	-13.43%	56.40%	85.00%
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	9.00%	9.00%	0.00%	12.30%	43.00%

Source: US Census Bureau, Census 1990 and 2000, SF3

Transportation

Transportation is exceptionally efficient for the Village Shopping Center. Because it is a hub of NECD and along two main thoroughfares, there are DATA lines that run throughout the area. The neighborhood residents tend to carpool and use public transportation more than other Northeast Central Durham residents. This may be due to the lack of car ownership among residents, yet, after speaking with residents, there are not many problems when it comes to transportation issues. Also, there is a vast network of sidewalks that connect the neighborhoods to the north, east, and south of the Village Shopping Center, making the commercial district more accessible for pedestrian and bike traffic..

Assets, Challenges & Opportunities

Assets

Crime reduction in recent years has improved the quality of life for residents as well as the image of NECD. The Village Shopping Center and environs are well used by the majority of the diverse community around it. Recent beautification efforts have contributed to its appearance of prosperity. As previously mentioned, both of these business districts are located on major roads leading into and out of downtown Durham and located on Durham Area Transit Authority (DATA) transit routes. These business districts are in prime locations already possessing solid structures and potential customers essential for success.

We asked: What do you like most about running a business in the area?

"You can live and work in the area"
"Help lower-income people"
"Close to many points in Durham"
"Good police presence"
"Being able to communicate and respect one another"
"Neighborhood next door draws employment"
"Clients are very nice"

Challenges

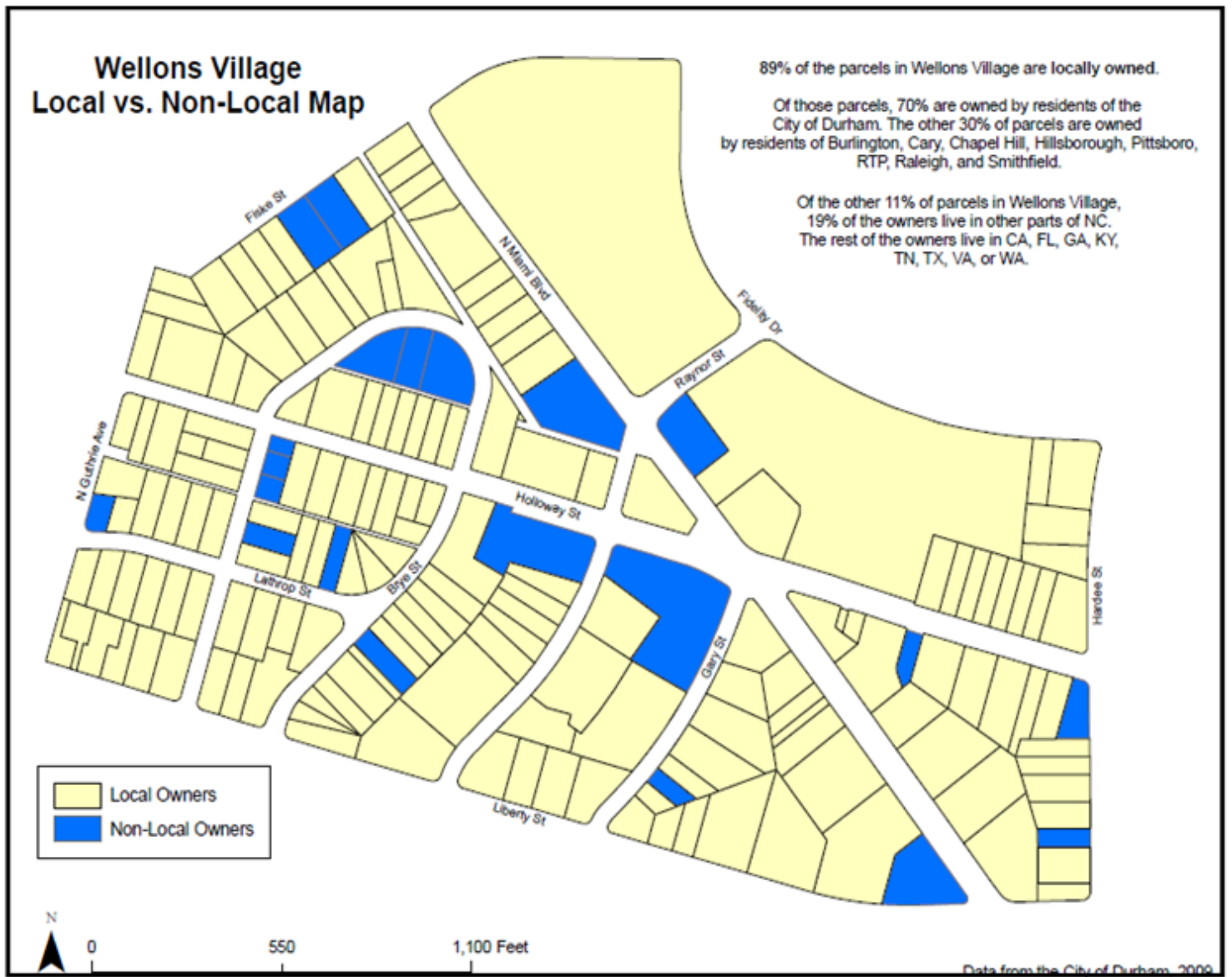
Challenges for these areas are due in part to the perceived negative image of the community and the limited connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods and larger Durham community. The physical condition of the Angier and Driver intersection business district has been a result of a long period of disinvestment making the area unattractive for businesses and residents. NECD has a reputation of crime, drug problems and prostitution, developing a negative community image. Through an aggressive focus on targeting crime, called "Operation Bull's Eye," the community and Durham Police Department have made significant progress in changing this association by reducing crime in the area to its lowest point in almost twenty-five years.

We asked: What are the greatest challenges you face running a business in the area?

"Perception of the public viewing the area"
"Negative public perception"
"Homeless/panhandlers"
"Vacant/boarded up houses"
"Customers fears of coming here"
"Lots of trash"
"Visual barriers/unsafe"
"Substance abuse by people around the stores"
"Needs to have a better"

The majority of buildings at the intersection of Angier and Driver Street are vacant and deteriorating, which creates an eyesore for the neighborhoods and, more importantly, make it difficult to cultivate reinvestment. There is also an information gap for businesses regarding available space in the community, what programs or assistance is accessible, and what support networks can be tapped into. Furthermore, not all real estate is owned locally, making the assurance of local ownership more difficult (see **Figure 5**).

Figure 5: Local and Non-Local Owners of Wellons Village Commercial District



Opportunities

Opportunities exist to coordinate these separate businesses and retailers in order to create a unified district that can provide higher quality and availability of service. The Angier and Driver business intersection includes many empty buildings, but this offers potential for small storefront retail and businesses. Both the Wellons Village Shopping Center and the Angier and Driver intersection are opportunities for the City to reinvest in the community, which would provide further employment for residents and increased availability of products and services. Neighborhood contacts Donald Yarboro and Reverend Melvin Whitley believe the community has the capacity and skills to accomplish most of the tasks involved in a revitalization plan. They also mention the possibility that the history of the neighborhood could be used to spur redevelopment and local revenue.

Summary of Neighborhood Priorities

The identified challenges among business owners include fragmentation, disorganization, and lack of communication within and between the NECD business districts and to the greater city. Encouraging and facilitating communication between those with stake in the neighborhood will allow groups to work together in the interest of the community. Area awareness, community activism, and pride in business will help Northeast Central Durham reach its greatest potential in business and community service.

Collective challenges emerged from a process of stakeholder meetings and discussions with local business owners, which guided the selection of the commercial district's priority issues. From public meetings and conversations with key business owners it became apparent that there is a lack of communication between area businesses, low or sporadic employment among neighborhood residents, and a nonexistent process or place for information to be received and disseminated among area businesses or inquiring residents. Providing a forum for local business owners to speak face-to-face about their concerns and experiences revealed a shared sentiment of a lack of confidence and a desire to become more involved with the surrounding area. From conversations with businesses owners and public meetings it was realized that a formalized business bureau or organization should be created.

A formalized business organization would keep business owners abreast of criminal activity in the center and foster a greater bond and protectionism among them that would reach out to patrons of one another's shops. It would also provide opportunities for other shared resources like City grant and loans for improvements and development. The creation of a business bureau would formalize a unified voice with the power to raise concerns to the Chamber and the City of Durham, thereby ensuring that NECD business owners would be recognized and heard.

It is important to note these areas as not just faltering storefronts, but as opportunities for potential neighborhood employment and as local services fulfilling vital needs for residents. Currently, many of the existing businesses consist of low-wage retail jobs and provide day-to-day services for residents, including auto repair shops, restaurants, and grocery and clothing stores. Unfortunately, some businesses fulfill a niche of exploiting residents through disreputable services, such as "quick cash marts" that charge high interest rates or pawn shops capitalizing on traded goods.

The priorities are listed in the matrix in **Figure 6** on the next page. Since many of the short-term priorities feed into the long-term priority of creating a business association, the following section will focus almost exclusively on the details of implementation of that particular priority.

Goals						
Figure 6: Wellons Village Priority Matrix						
1	Support existing businesses in achieving maximum retail success					
2	Encourage the growth and stable economy of new retail stores and services that are in agreement with the NECD Community Development Mission Statement					
3	Improve the perception of the community's Commercial Areas through physical improvements and maintenance					
	Short-Term		Want/Need	Purpose	Goals Targeted	Actors
Cost	Action Item		Want/Need	Purpose	Goals Targeted	Actors
Low	Improve communication between area business		Need	Business owners expressed the lack of communication between other business owners as a limitation for changing the community	1,2,3	Business Owners/Managers, OEWD, CD
Low	Encourage Leadership from existing business owners		Need	Community/Business leaders are key to the initial and ongoing success of any project for NECD businesses	1,2	Business Owners/Managers, OEWD, CD, EO/EA
Low	Create a Vision		Need	Develop a vision and mission for each business district as well as NECD in order to understand the direction and goals	1,2	Business Owners/Managers, Neighborhood residents
High	Establish a Business Education and Resources Program		Want	Raising awareness and educating area business owners to help grow their business	1,2	Business Owners/Managers, OEWD, EO/EA
Low	Encourage property owners to clean and maintain the structures and grounds of their place of business		Want	Improving the physical appearance can change the perception of the community and shopping centers	3	Business Owners/Managers, Landowners
	Long-Term					
Cost	Action Item		Want/Need	Purpose	Goals Targeted	Actors
High	Establish a NECD Business Bureau		Want	Building a group of business owners who achieve success through influence and presence in economic decision making for NECD. An organization where business and community interests converge	1,2	Business Owners/Managers, OEWD
High	Establish a Business and Employment Resource Center		Want	Would provide assistance to existing businesses, prospective businesses and neighborhood residents and entrepreneurs	2	OEWD, EO/EA
OEWD-Office of Economic and Workforce Development						
EO/EA-Department of Equal Opportunity/Equity Assurance						
CD-Department of Community Development						

Long-Term Priorities (3-10 years)

Long-Term Priority 1: Establish a Business and Employment Resource Center

Goal: Establish a business and employment resource center to provide assistance and opportunities for area residents and entrepreneurs.

The long-term priorities focus on the creation of a formalized business bureau and establishment of a business and employment resource center to continue to build and foster business opportunities in NECD and provide useful resources to residents and business owners. A barrier to implementing such a strategy includes the need for a solid leadership team among the business owners who are motivated and are champions for their area. Additionally, according to the business owners, there is often not much time away from their jobs that they have opportunities to attend and plan for such meetings, especially if the times and locations are not conducive to the owners' schedules.

Establishing a business and employment resource center for NECD businesses and area residents would provide a local centralized office that would serve as a place to exchange resources and information and provide meeting space for the business bureau. Such a hub aims to accommodate local businesses without access to technologies (computer, internet, etc.) or other resources. Communication between business owners and residents could assist all involved parties in pooling their resources, helping to create success and stability for NECD, and attracting businesses and investment to the area. This resource center is based on the assumption that owners would utilize a centralized space and that a funding source could be found.

Long-Term Priority 2: Establish a NECD Business Bureau

Goal: Building a group of business owners who achieve success through influence and presence in economic decision making for NECD. A self-governed and self-sustained organization where individual business interests and community interests converge.

Background: The key priority for the Village is to increase communication and cohesion among business owners in the Center by creating a central business bureau. The Village is made up of pockets of economic activity but lacks a formal business advocacy organization, leaving the neighborhood shopping center fractured. Although common goals exist, business owners do not communicate with one another. Bringing this group together through their common goals can stimulate social interaction and create a strong hub of economic activity. The creation of a formal business bureau within the Village will foster a collaborative spirit among business owners and residents which could help the local economy grow.

Creating a business bureau for an economically distressed area can facilitate economic growth and bolster social capital. In order to be successful, an implementation plan must clearly support business owners and

residents. The plan should assess and respond to the resources business owners have to access information and their capacity to take ownership of the project while creating a forum for shared knowledge and communication.

The economic well-being of an area is often gauged by the quantity and quality of existing businesses. Currently, businesses in the Village exist to serve the needs of the local community, but empty storefronts indicate an opportunity for growth. Individuals within the community possess skills that could contribute to the local economy through employment, volunteerism, entrepreneurship, or management. Currently, there are few resources to direct and inform individuals how their skills can be applied in the NECD community. This disconnect fails to recognize the existing skills and leaves them without application or direction.

Forming a business bureau to serve and direct community members and business owners would bring together existing businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs. Through open access and community integration, this service can achieve the goals of economic prosperity and enhanced social capital to create a sustainable business community that is economically prosperous and can attract and retain businesses that cater to a diverse clientele.

Business owners generally share a vision of watching their businesses prosper, seeing their customer base expand, and continue to be needed in the community in which they serve. A local business bureau specifically serving the Village must identify and set similar goals, comprehensively working to provide a sustainable business culture. Ideally, a business bureau would help businesses prosper, connect business owners to one another, and build community knowledge. A business bureau would create an accessible forum in which to exchange ideas and involve business owners, giving ownership to those in the community and providing services and support that are currently nonexistent. A business bureau would spark new businesses and give guidance to entrepreneurs or potential employees, all the while utilizing the existing skill in the area and combating unemployment.

Action Steps: There are three strategies to create a business bureau. Each strategy varies in time and cost, therefore leading to varied results. The three strategies that will be discussed are an electronic business bureau, a series of delegation meetings, and a community building located within the area it serves. Although the various business bureau implementation plans work to achieve the same goal, variations in time and money result in the emphasis of different priorities. Only a truly integrated business bureau can achieve connectivity and sustainable economic growth.

1. The most simple and short-term solution is an electronic database of existing businesses and opportunities, which would enhance information sharing. This solution is low-cost, consisting only of maintaining a website and staff member to collect and update information as necessary. While this would provide a com-

prehensive listing of area businesses and potential involvement opportunities, engagement of the public and business owners would be limited. Ease of information availability would make this an enticing option for the Department of Community Development, yet viability may not be practical for the Village area, as residents have low internet usage rates. Furthermore, this approach focuses on the dispersal of information from the Department of Community Development to the public, rather than directly encouraging economic prosperity and the sharing of ideas between business owners.

2. A second option, more demanding of time and money, but still not fully community-integrated, is forming an official delegation of business owners and Department of Community Development staff. Through discussion and preliminary meetings, this delegation would be formed by any business owners who show strong interest in topics related to economic development and local business growth for the benefit of all members involved. The sense of achievement and benefits gained from a relationship with a city department would encourage participation. Such collaboration would work to bring business owners face-to-face and lead them through strategic planning. This option brings stakeholders together by providing a forum where they can share ideas. An official delegation would also allow access to professionals who can provide technical assistance and support to develop strategic plans and individual consultations. Skilled staff would engage the business owners and focus on the group's needs while encouraging them to work together and aid one another to create a prosperous community.

Since many employees in the Village area are also residents, personnel turnover would not be a large concern. Dedicated store owners could influence surrounding stores to become part of the collaboration. This approach would also increase homeownership among the residents, allowing the Department of Community Development to see who they are working with and guide them in the process of governance. While this method is promising in many aspects, it lacks sustainability and ownership within the community. The "public meeting" format may also be frustrating to residents and business owners, who are traditionally skeptical of working with outsiders, therefore making buy-in potentially difficult. This is a longer-term process, satisfying the desire for government involvement, but belaboring the finality or observation of results. Sporadic meetings seldom draw a constant crowd as business owners are already committed during the daytime hours and presumably have other commitments during their non-work hours. Stakeholders may be further discouraged by the existence of several other community organizations which conduct evening meetings, spreading their participation thin. A long-term goal for this type of 'business bureau' would be to facilitate a continuous connection among area business owners so that they may take ownership of the process, however, lack of community direction and the risk of sporadic presence by participants leaves this option as lower cost, high risk, and makes seeing immediate results unlikely.

3. A comprehensive approach to creating a business bureau for the Village is using an abandoned space to create a permanent hub of information and connectivity. The physical presence of this type of community aid is a service that is currently needed and wanted. A permanent presence in the community will build trust between business owners and the Department of Community Development, as the service will be continuous rather than a temporary interest in the community. A physical space will also serve as a concrete 'safe' place to do business, access information, and have meetings. The focus on serving the client and customer will instill a sense of pride in the business owners. Currently, space exists for this type of approach; making it more cost effective than setting up a new office and investing in new staff. Regardless of challenges, opportunities exist to use the new space to facilitate employment opportunities for current residents or individuals looking for work. Providing them the opportunity to take part in the construction of this project builds immediate ownership and reciprocation for the community.

From a leadership aspect, this approach will strategically place key stakeholders and Department of Community Development employees directly in the Village, giving them a first-hand account of needs and challenges, and allowing them to shift from the question of, 'who governs' to, 'for what?'. This small change will emphasize the need for individuals in leadership positions to be in tune with the goals of the community.

This approach will also build social capital, defined as interactions inspiring trust and reciprocity among citizens. Serving as a vehicle for both economic development and social engagement, the creation of this type of business bureau is a longer-term implementation tactic, but would have more rapid results, instantaneously providing a physical and social space where people can connect, find help, and thus lead to a spark in community growth.

Benchmarks: The success of this project could be evaluated on the number of new businesses formed in the area, the turnover level of existing businesses, and the overall economic prosperity and growth. If successful, a business bureau would result in a renewed interest in the Village shopping center and patronage by both internal and external residents.

Though there is not yet a clear end goal, there are further indicators and measures of success. A business bureau must provide continuity and remain up to date as the community shifts and grows. Despite the constantly evolving process of this project there are several indicators of success including the transfer of ownership, economic growth, and rise in neighborhood interest. These three indicators of success are also measures of evaluating the needs. Transfer of ownership from government staff to community stakeholders shows a renewed sense of pride and hope for the community. As business owners begin to brainstorm and voice their own ideas, volunteers can take charge of the direction of the bureau and business

owners can shape the way they feel the process needs to move. The economic stability and growth of the area, indicated by a low turnover in business, fewer closures, and more business openings creates a sustainable income and leads to a more prosperous area. Finally, the involvement and integration of entrepreneurs and new employees into the process signifies that the Village has become a thriving place for opportunity and job creation. Interest in the community will create a new market for underutilized skills as well as greater degrees of social capital.

Proposed Funding Sources: The initial implementation costs for a Business Bureau would be low, but could require a high amount of time and effort on the part of Department of Community Development staff to reach out and help organize the Village Commercial area. Once businesses in the area begin organizing themselves and leaders emerge, Community Development staff time will be reduced. The City's Office of Economic and Workforce Development and Department of Community Development could provide economic support, but a substantial source of funding will come from the area businesses. A large source of funding would still need to come through the city, but employing volunteers, having a space donated, or working with a nonprofit community development organization or local economic development organization could cut costs and acquire grants or restricted funding. The Department of Community Development should explore the possibility of public-private partnerships in the hopes of finding a 'do-good' investor or a non-profit which supports business creation and incubation.

Proposed Timeline: Organizing the Wellons Village commercial area businesses has already begun, but it needs encouragement and support. Depending on the strategy the Department of Community Development chooses to adopt, the potential business bureau could be created in as little time as a few months. If the Department chooses to create a web-based database, inventory and compilation of information would take merely several months. If the city is able to get more in depth with the project and necessary funding, the project would take upwards of two years to establish a physical space for a business bureau, recruit volunteers and part-time workers, and maintain a network between business owners. It is important to note that work on this project will always continue to evolve. As new businesses enter the Village area and new owners become a part of the Bureau, the needs of residents will always be changing. The timeline should focus only on setting up a strong foundation on which the project can grow and change in the hands of the business owners.

Key Actions: As discussed, a business bureau can take several different forms when integrated into the community, but not all forms will have ultimate success. The barriers to communication and economic growth lie in the absence of a forum where opinions can be voiced and visions can be unified.

✦ The initial step is to continue to support NECD business owners in their efforts to organize and form solid

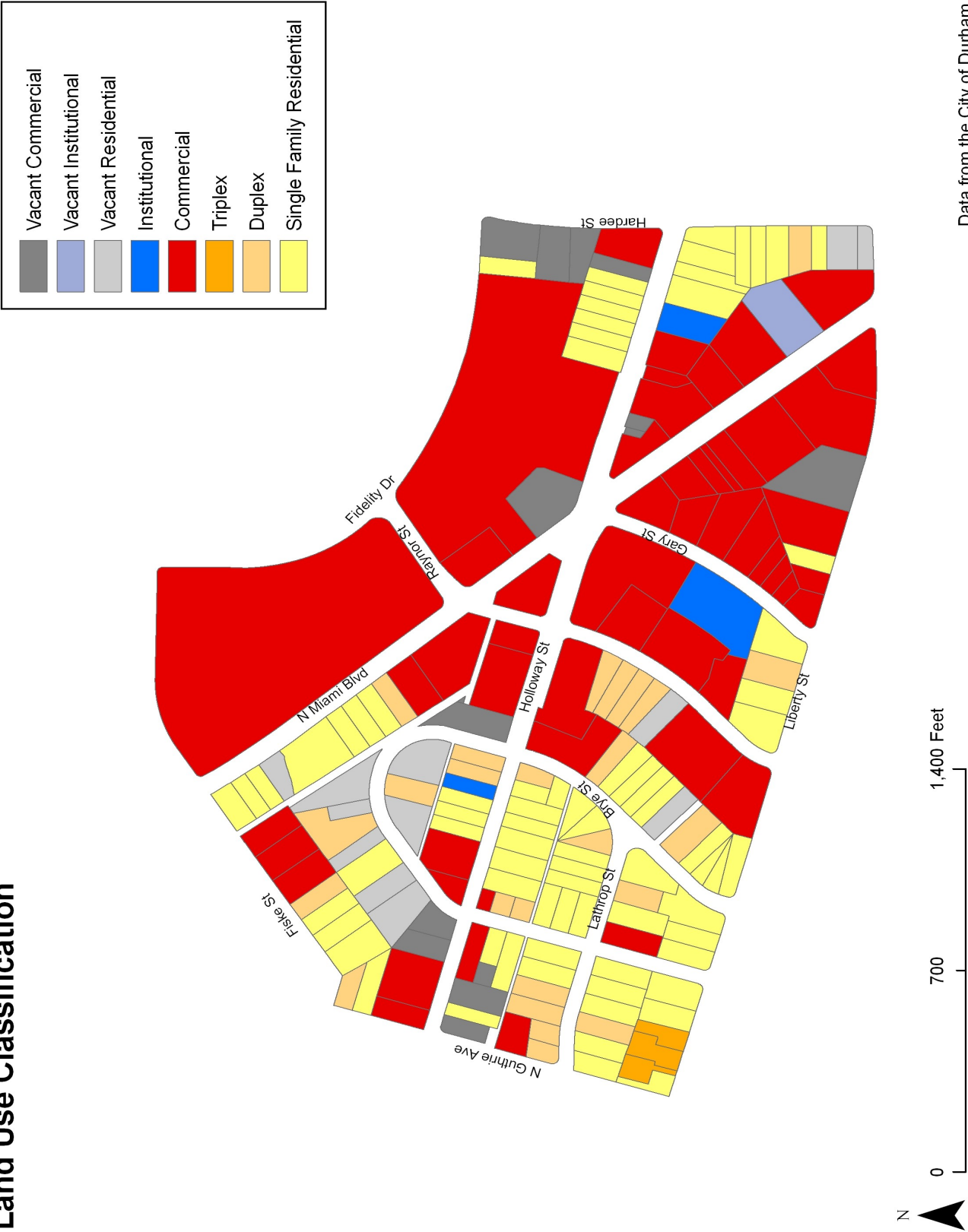
relations within their area as well as the greater NECD community and the City of Durham. Garnering interest and organizing the business community is an ongoing endeavor, but it is a key to the success of a sustainable formal business organization.

- ✦ A key priority to the creation and success of a formal business community organization is the development and agreement of a unified vision and the main priorities of the community.
- ✦ Another important step, which the city should assist with or other organizations, is the creation of business and educational resource programs for business owners and residents of NECD. These programs should offer assistance, outreach, and training for the community.
- ✦ The formation of NECD businesses into a unified Business Bureau should take place once sufficient interest and key leaders have emerged from the business community. Establishing such an organization lends formality and subsistence for the interests of business owners and would provide more leverage for the community's priorities and needs.
- ✦ A final step to creating a sustainable community is a Business and Employment Resource Center located in NECD with the goal of providing training, assistance, and resources to residents looking for employment or needing/wanting training for employment as well as a resource for existing and potential business owners and entrepreneurs.

The Department of Community Development should focus on sustainable long-term solutions rather than short-term or temporary answers. Investment must be made in this area to aid the community as well as the business-owners. Spending a longer time preparing for implementation is worthwhile when results will be greater for all of the stakeholders.

Appendix 1: Wellons Village Land Use Classifications

Wellons Village
Land Use Classification

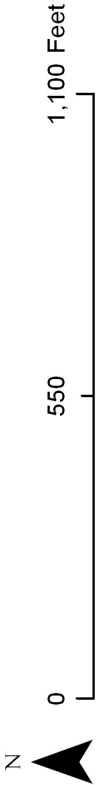
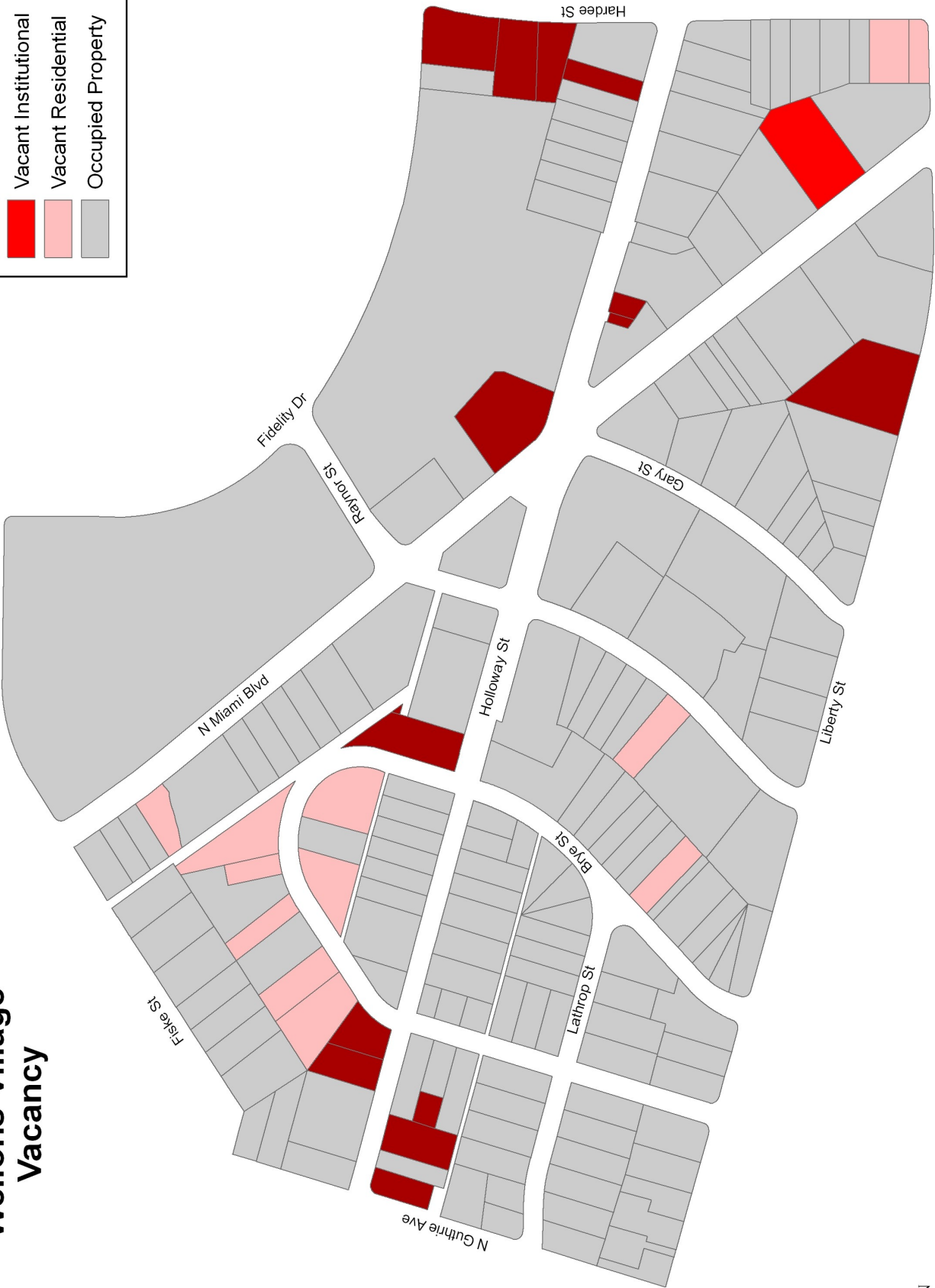
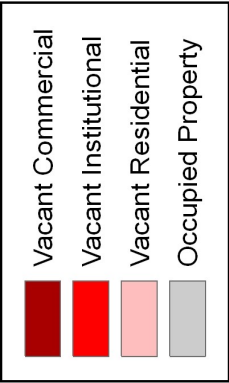


Appendix 2: Wellons Village Demographics

Demographic Information	Wellons Village 1990	Wellons Village 2000	% Change 1990-2000	NECD 2000	% of NECD	City of Durham 2000	% of Durham
Population	2,357	2,852	21.00%	24,848	100.00%	187,035	100.00%
Race/Ethnicity							
African-American	1,838	1,996	8.60%	18,035	72.58%	81,937	43.81%
Hispanic	18	549	2950.00%	4,279	17.22%	16,012	8.56%
Asian	2	9	350.00%	47	0.19%	6,815	3.64%
White	509	254	-50.10%	3,694	14.87%	85,126	45.51%
American Indian/ Native American	3	6	100.00%	107	0.43%	575	0.31%
Age							
0-19	807	1,062	31.60%	8,533	34.34%	49,742	26.60%
20 to 34	618	766	23.95%	6,865	27.63%	57,041	30.50%
35 to 54	594	704	18.52%	6,299	25.35%	51,125	27.33%
55 to 64	152	160	5.26%	1,330	5.35%	11,712	6.26%
Over 65	186	160	-13.98%	728	2.93%	17,415	9.31%

Source: US Census Bureau, Census 1990 and 2000, SF1

Wellons Village Vacancy



Data from the City of Durham, 2009